

Applicant/Serial No.: Haruhiro Watanabe / 10/624,168
Filed/Conf. No. 07/21/2003 / Conf. No. 6365
Examiner/Group: Michael S. Lowe / 3652
Amendment mailed: 12 / 08 / 2005
Attorney File: MM0721US (#90326)

REMARKS

Examination of the present application is acknowledged. According to the Office Action dated September 8, 2005, the drawings were objected to because they failed to depict the "transfer of an article from between the article supporting body and the article handling section" as recited in claim 1. Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, because of the statement "at least partially in a synchronized manner." Finally, claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Brudi (U.S. 3,757,977) in view of Derby (U.S. 6,394,736). By the present amendment, each of these matters has been addressed.

Turning first to the drawings, new Figs. 10(d) and 12(b) have been added, and the Annotated Sheets showing Changes with new figures are attached. Replacement Sheets in draft form are also attached, but they will be replaced once approved by the Examiner.

These figures show the transfer of an article W supported by upper fork member 54 to the article unloading section 5 following the step shown in Fig. 10(c) pursuant to the first embodiment of the invention. Likewise, in accordance with the second embodiment of the invention, Fig. 12(d) follows the action subsequent to that of Fig. 12(c), and upper fork member 54 has been moved to article loading section 5. The specification has been amended accordingly, since paragraphs [0056] and [0064] have been amended to reflect that the details set forth in those paragraphs are shown in the drawings. It is requested that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn. It is furthermore requested that the Examiner advise the undersigned if the drawings are in an acceptable form, after which formal drawings will be filed for the above-identified application.

With respect to the rejection of claim 3 as being indefinite, claim 3 has been amended to recite that the movable body performs a longitudinal movement whilst the turning body performs a turning movement in a synchronised manner. The term "at least partially," which had preceded "in a synchronized manner," has been deleted. It is requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 be withdrawn.

Turning next to the rejection of claims 1-6 as being obvious from Brudi in view of Derby, this rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 1 recites a method of transferring articles to and from an article handling section having a self-propelled carriage for travelling along a fixed path, the carriage having a body movable in a longitudinal direction with respect to the carriage body and a turnable body which turns around a vertical axis with respect to the movable body. Claim 1 specifically recites the step of "moving the movable body whilst turning the turnable body about the vertical axis...." Turning to the specification, it is explained according to the first preferred embodiment of the invention that a movable body 31 is capable of moving in a longitudinal direction "A" with respect to a vehicle body 12. In the first embodiment of the invention, this is shown in Fig. 9(b) and Fig. 10(b), and in the second preferred embodiment of the invention, this is shown in Fig. 11(b) and Fig. 12(b). In these embodiments, movable body 31 is capable of moving in a direction A with respect to vehicle body 12. This type of movement of movable body 31 makes it possible that a fork device 51 loaded with an article W can be turned on a minimum track distance without needless protrusion. This is to be differentiated with Brudi which only provides for rotation in a clockwise direction by piston rods 37 and 38 (as described in col. 3, lines 4-9), but turntable 30 cannot move in a forward and backward movement of lift track T, as explained in column 2, line 49 – column 3, line 3, of Brudi.

It states throughout Brudi that it is only rotatable. With reference to Figs. 3 and 4, Brudi states that turntable 30, connected to sprocket wheel 31, rotates on a pin 32 mounted in the bottom

of a base member 25, the turntable being supported on rollers 33 mounted in the turntable. The turntable is rotated by a pair of piston rods 37 and 38 in columns 40 and 41.

Claim 1 of Brudi recites a turntable on the base member and means in the base member for rotating the turntable. There is no statement that it moves in the longitudinal direction, that is direction A, as stated in the present specification, wherefore Brudi by itself cannot support the rejection of claim 1. Derby does not supply the lack of the disclosure of Brudi for rejecting claim 1.

Derby has been cited for the statement at column 6, lines 60-63, reading as follows: "The benefits of the simultaneous translation and rotation of BMC unloader 2, earlier described in connection with Fig. 3, should now be clear. "There is not a simultaneous translation and rotation disclosed in Derby which relates to the present application. Referring first to Fig. 2 of Derby, a Bulk Mail Container (BMC) is rolled into BMC unloader 2. The BMC unloader is then actuated as shown in Fig. 3 to upend BMC unloader 2 to discharge the contents thereof. As noted in column 3, lines 22-24, "unloader and ground linkage pivot points 24 and 25 are fixed attachments permitting no linear movement, but only a pivotal rotation about pivot points 24 and 25." The paragraph at column 3, lines 12-34, explains that crossed bars 22 and 23 pivot BMC unloader 2 to discharge its contents. The movement of BMC 2 is rotational, but, as explained in column 3, line 40, through column 4, line 5 of Derby, the exact movement is a very mild arc due to the variation of the center of mass of the mail and packages in the BMC unloader 2. This can be seen in the movement shown in Fig. 3.

As noted above, claim 1 includes as one of its recited steps, "moving the movable body whilst turning the turntable body about the vertical axis...." Claim 2 relates to a method of transferring articles...using a self-propelled carriage, the carriage comprising a movable body movable in a longitudinal direction..., a turntable body turnable about a vertical axis, said method comprising the steps of...performing initial turning of the turntable body... moving the movable

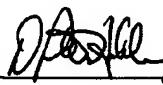
body whilst performing the intermediate turning of the turnable body...performing final turning of the turnable body..., performing a transfer of an article between the article supporting body and the article handling section...." All of these method claims refer to the steps of turning a turnable body while moving the movable body, and neither Brudi nor Derby discloses or teaches methods having these steps.

Claim 4 has been rejected based on the statement in the Office Action that Brudi teaches a cover member 22 for covering the article supporting body located on top of the carriage body such that at least a portion of the carriage body is turnable in unison with the turnable body. Claim 4 in its present form defines the invention in more precise terms which clearly distinguishes it from Brudi. Claim 4 states that the cover member comprises a fixed cover section located on the front end of the carriage body, a sliding cover section capable of sliding with respect to the fixed cover section and a movable cover section located in a turnable manner in unison with the turnable body. It is respectfully requested that claim 4 in its present form be allowed.

Claim 5 depends from claim 3 and should be allowable along with the allowance of its parent claim. Likewise, claim 6 depends from claim 4 and it, too, should be allowed with its parent claim. Accordingly, allowance of claims 5 and 6 is respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

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DPH/ck
Enc.: Proposed drawing changes to Figs. 10 & 12

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 C.F.R 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached hereto or transmitted herewith) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Date: 12 / 08 / 2005

By: Christine Kotran

Christine Kotran

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Drawing figure sheets showing original Figs. 10(a)-10(c) with a new Fig. 10(d) and original Fig. 12(a)-12(c) with a new Fig. 12(d) are attached labeled as "Annotated Sheet Showing Changes" and "Replacement Sheet." These are both in draft form. Once approved, a formal set of both drawing figure sheets marked "Replacement Sheet" will be filed.

ANNOTATED SHEET SHOWING CHANGES

FIG. 12 (a)

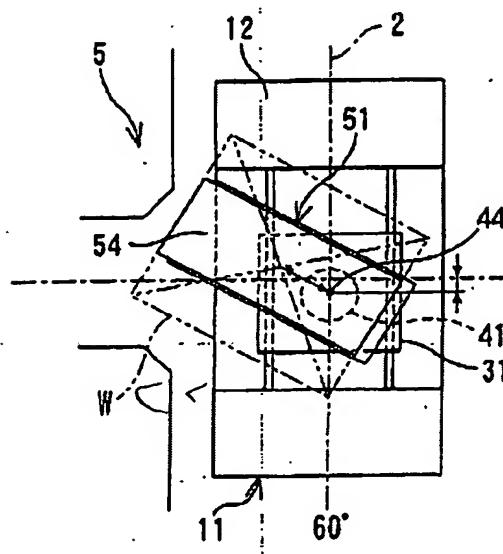


FIG. 12 (b)

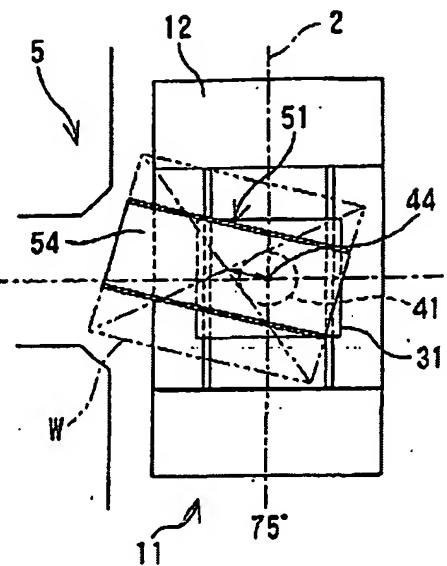


FIG. 12 (c)

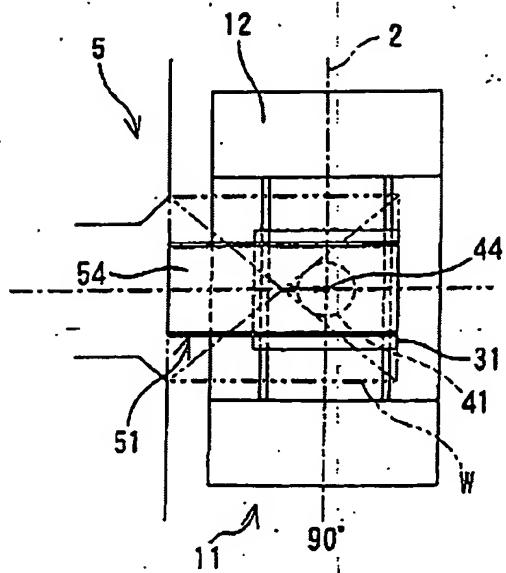
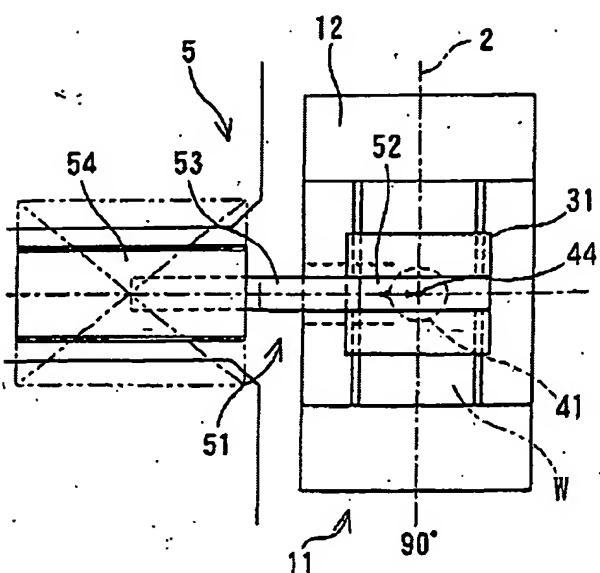


FIG. 12 (d)



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ANNOTATED SHEET SHOWING CHANGES

FIG. 10 (a)

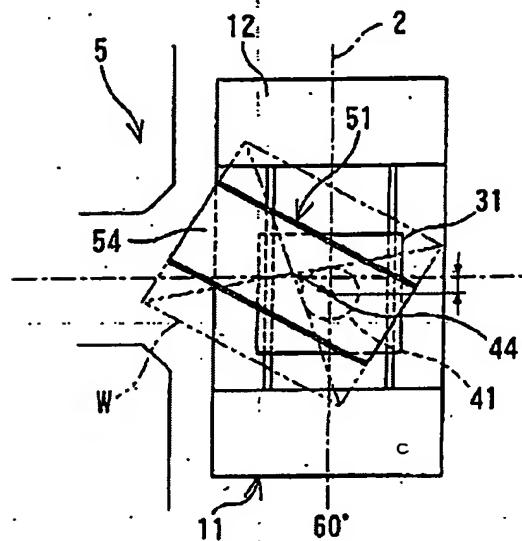


FIG. 10 (b)

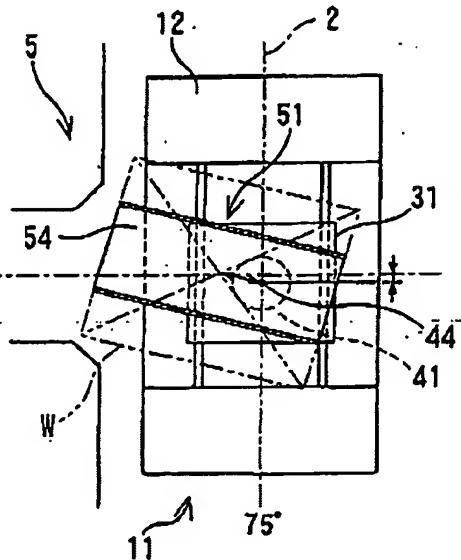


FIG. 10 (c)

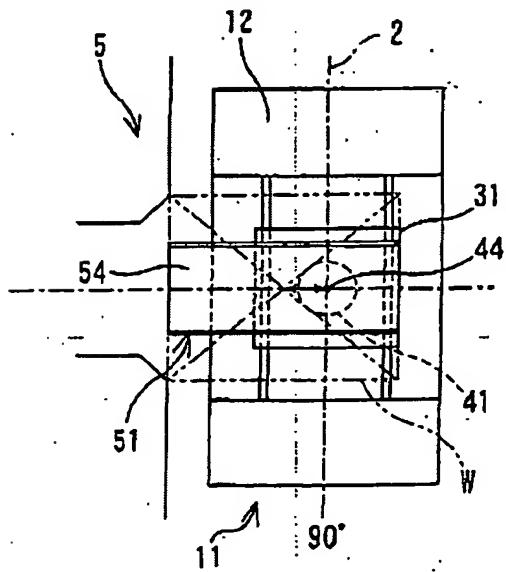


FIG. 10 (d)

